Interview with Cyanhide (2004)



What remains of your beginnings, in terms of music? Can we say that it is the same spirit that animates Cyanhide despite the various evolutions and line-up changes?

The spirit hasn't changed since the beginning. Indeed the line-up has. Cyanhide was looking for itself at the beginning, in the sense that we didn't know very well where we were going. Personally, I have long expected the other members to invest themselves on this level, and participate as much as I do in defining the spirit of the band. But most of the time, the attitude in front of them was more of a wait-and-see attitude than anything else. And some things took longer than necessary at that time. Today, the idea is that each album has its own musical choice, colour, aesthetic, spirit. The first album *Early Projects* was a collection of old tracks, and the whole thing was rather heterogeneous, sounding like rock. Then there was *Cairns*, more Celtic in the lyrics and general spirit, more gothic in the music. As for the third album, *DanceFloor*, it sounds more electro and reflects our musical tendencies, which are relatively varied. This album straddles several styles, and that's exactly what we wanted to do. We didn't want to do something very specialised, like 'indus-noisy', which would have frustrated us because it would have only reflected a part of our aspirations. It would have been too partial, and wouldn't have had anything real. Compared to the early days, the underground rock & roll / punk spirit is still there. Once a lardhead, always a lardhead... We are who we are and we don't radically change our character overnight... So we stay honest…

Has Cyanhide finally found the right formula: the duo? How do you go about composing? Is there a leader or not?

No leader in the sense of "I impose". That's not our spirit. Everyone brings what they can and then that's it. In general, we start with a slightly advanced "synth-sampler" melodic base which is the first form of the song. Then we work on it, we enrich it, we criticize it, and it evolves like that as we go along. As for knowing if it's THE right formula, I would say that it works today, but nothing is set in stone. It depends on the people involved. It's true that with two people, we don't have to worry as much as when there was a drummer, two guitarists, and a bass player... Besides that, it's also because we don't really have a choice. For example, today we have a hard time finding a drummer (that's what we need the most), and we still have to move forward...

The electronic part is growing in Cyanhide. Do you consider yourself as an electro band for that reason?

I don't know actually. We do our own thing without really worrying about the label. Electro is part of our culture, that's for sure. Today, I find gothic music more and more boring, because it doesn't renew itself at all. When you've been around a bit, you end up with the same tracks over and over again, and it gets boring. Electro is (a bit) younger, and more playful. We integrate it in our compositions, because it's part of our culture and our tastes. Anyway, we also compose to fill a gap: what we can't find elsewhere. In a way, the goal is to fill a cultural hole, to make something that resembles us, and that we have never found elsewhere. After that, if it's difficult to find a label for us, then it means that we may have succeeded in our gamble: we're no longer on a beaten track.

It seems that unlike many bands who don't particularly care about their lyrics, or even limit them to a few slogans or hackneyed formulas, you are keen to write lyrics that express your ideas and judgement on the world around you. Can you tell us more?

Lyrics seem to me to be as much a part of the music as any other instrument. It is indeed important to get a message across, or at least to bring something more to the track.

Many bands are more attracted to the limelight and pseudo-celebrity than anything else, and many should refrain from committing certain horrors that pollute the whole. One could say this in the form, "when you have nothing to say, it's better to keep quiet". Who hasn't thought that when listening to some magazine samplers? Having said that, today within Cyanhide we are trying to simplify the texts, to go back to shorter things. Still strong, but shorter, more concise, more efficient. And why? Because it's not necessarily good to fall into wordiness, and to extend the sauce indefinitely, and because it pisses everyone off in the end. I'm not going to say that's what we were doing, that would be wrong – I dare to believe it – but it's still a flaw we try to avoid above all else. In the end, we simplify, but be careful not to oversimplify. It's all a question of dosage. Neither all one nor all the other…

It may seem surprising for a band that integrates an electronic dimension in its music (with all the "futuristic" imagery that this brings), but you have Celtic influences, musically and spiritually; where does this come from and what importance does it have for you?

Everything Celtic touches us in some way, it's true. It's more in the realm of the felt than the intellectual, and I don't really know how to explain it, maybe our origins, for part of it anyway. Anyway, it's true that it has a certain importance for us. So why not integrate electronics, since it's also part of us, in a rather "Celtic" spirit? In any case, what makes something Celtic or not is the spirit in which it is done, not the instrument used. The instrument, as its name indicates, is only a tool, a means, an intermediary to get a certain message across. One should not confuse the goal (the music) and the means (the instrument). To focus on the means is to forget the goal, and to lie to oneself in the end. It's like people who are obsessed with money, and have forgotten that it's only a fluid, an intermediary of life, but not life itself.

You are obviously a band made for live performances. What is your best concert to date?

Well, I don't know. There isn't ONE big gig that really stands out. Each one has had its own positive side, and comparisons don't always make much sense, because you're putting things together that aren't necessarily opposite. For example, you may have liked the venue but not the audience, and vice versa. You may also have liked the "surroundings" of the concert (the journey, relations with the staff, food, anecdotes) and not the concert itself, etc. And then we may have been in a receptive or open state of mind at a given moment, which means that we experienced things in a somewhat

magical way, and then other times, not. So there are a lot of parameters, and still not 100% in all areas. Otherwise, roughly speaking, I would say that the live show is still very important for us. Since we've been managing our lights for about a year now, it's opened up some very interesting possibilities, which means that we don't live our lives like we used to. I much prefer the way it is now. We are more... We're more "in it", and we're less subject to certain unpleasant hazards... And it's still going to evolve.